

Trinity Primary Deputation to Education Committee

8th September 2009

The proposal to close Fort and move all the children to Trinity is fundamentally flawed, both educationally and financially, while the needs of the children have not been placed at the heart of this proposal

Educationally

Both sets of pupils will be disadvantaged following this proposal:

Trinity pupils -

- Classroom overcrowding
- Loss of science room
- Loss of IT suite
- Much smaller Support for Learning room (despite much greater need)
- Much smaller library space
- Unable to meet recommended 2 hrs PE for each child

Fort pupils -

- Loss of Positive Action Area status. The pupils' needs don't change
- Loss of smaller class sizes
- Loss of learning support assistant & Support For Learning teacher's time to Trinity pupils

Attainment

Since 2003 both schools have delivered attainment improvement in all measures

Fort's attainment is 10% better than comparable socio-economic schools

Logically, loss of facilities, loss of teacher support and the impact of overcrowding are all detrimental

Council Report & Objectives

The list of educational benefits from larger schools in the proposal is generalised and does not reflect Trinity's individual circumstances and the proposed infrastructure changes

The drawbacks we raise are not highlighted in the report

The council's stated aim is to reach a national class size outcome in P1-3 of 18

However, this proposal will deliver classes in P1 of 38, P2 of 33 and P3 of 37

Council Report & Objectives

Smaller class sizes (not to be confused with teacher to pupil ratios) carry educational benefit. The proposal is against stated aim, so the educational impact to all children is detrimental

Financially

Savings –

There are no capital receipts as Fort is not being sold

Net saving is projected at just £178k

Report does not reflect –

Future costs required for conversion then reopening Fort as a school again

Costs incurred for Victoria Park Child & Family Centre while site is unsold

Costs for division of additional playground space from Victoria Park Centre

Further Impacts

Edinburgh primary school population predicted increase is 5% by 2013, 20% by 2018

Combined predicted roll at Trinity is 96% occupancy, and full in 2-3 years

Victoria Primary will not provide a solution, with just 29 spare places

This is a temporary proposal, not a permanent solution

Expenditure will be required to meet these imminent capacity challenges

Combined Impacts, Benefits and Conclusions

There is significant detrimental impact to Trinity and Fort children's education

The financial benefits are small, and do not account for all costs

There is no clarity over when Fort would need to be reopened

There will be no opportunity to integrate pupils into the new school

The proposals will break-up existing school communities at all levels now, and again when Fort re-opens

This proposal will...

- Waste, rather than save money
- Be highly disruptive
- Be detrimental to the community
- Be detrimental to the children's education

We support Fort's proposal to close Victoria Child and Family Centre and to combine it with Fort's early years centre, utilising some of the existing school capacity.

This alternative solution saves costs while providing capital receipts, utilises space efficiently and is better than a temporary proposal, keeping capacity for the anticipated future population growth.